air collision between its Boeing 747 and a Kazakhstan Airlines plane on November 12, 1996; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to ensure that due compensation is paid by Saudi Airlines?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Government will provide free legal aid to next of kin of the accident victims.

थोक मूल्य सूचकांक

*369. **प्रो० कुमार मल्होत्रा:** क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) वर्ष 1996-97 का बजट संसद में पेश किये जाने के दिन थोक मूल्य सूचकांक कितना था;

(ख) नवम्बर, 1996 को थोक मूल्य सूचकांक कितना था; और

(ग) मूल्य वृद्धि के क्या कारण है और सरकार उसे रोकने के लिए क्या कदम उठा रही है?

वित्त मंत्री (श्री पी० चिदम्बरम): (क) और (ख) 22.7.1996 को जब बजट प्रस्तुत किया गया था तो थोक मूल्य सूचकांक, जो कि साप्ताहिक आधार पर उपलब्ध होता है, 20.7.1996 को समाप्त हुए 16वें सप्ताह के लिए 312.4 और उसके बाद 27.7.1996 को समाप्त हुए सप्ताह में 313.3 था। 2.11.1996 को समाप्त हुए 31वें सप्ताह में थोक मूल्य सूचकांक (अनन्तिम) बढ़कर 318.6 हो गया था।

(ग) चालू वित्तीय वर्ष के दौरान, थोक मूल्य सूचकांक में वृद्धि का मुख्य कारण पेट्रोलियम उत्पादों, बिजली और कोयले के नियंत्रित मूल्य में वृद्धि के अतिरिक्त प्राथमिक वस्तुओं, विशेषकर आनाजों के मूल्यों में देखी गई बढ़त की प्रवृत्ति को माना जा सकता है। सरकार द्वारा खाद्य पदार्थों के मूल्यों में वृद्धि को संतुलित करने की दिशा में आपूर्ति पक्ष में किए गए उपायों में सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को सुदृढ़ करने और उसके कवरेज़ का विस्तार करने के अतिरिक्त भारतीय खाद्य निगम द्वारा खाद्यानों को खुले बाज़ार में बिक्री को जारी रखना शामिल है। मांग पक्ष में, सरकार 1996-97 के बजट में राजकोषीय घाटे को सकल घरेलू उत्पाद के 5 प्रतिशत तक सीमित रखने और विवेकयुक्त मौद्रिक नीति के जरिए मौद्रिक वृद्धि को 15.5-16 प्रतिशत तक सीमित रखने का प्रयास कर रही है।

Harsh Features of FERA

*370. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of certain very harsh and antiquated features of FERA;

(b) when was FERA promulgated;

(c) what are the specific features empowering competent authorities to arrest and detain for unduly long and uncertain periods of time;

(d) whether this power to detain, arrest, hold in custody has ever been misused; and

(e) if so, what avenues can citizens take in that case for redressal?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) FERA 1973 is a special enectment for regulating certain payments/dealings in foreign exchange which may have any bearing on the crucial aspects of conservation and augmentation of the foreign exchange reserves of its country, as also for its proper utilisation in the interests of the econmic development of the country. It came into force w.e.f. 1.1.1974. Government periodically reviews all the relevant aspects of the Act; During 1993 certain provisions of this Act, which were considered irrelevent/redundant/needing change were either omited or amended suitably.

Arrests are effected under Section 35 of FERA. 73 after taking into consideration all the relevant aspects of the case and after due application of mind, on the part of the Investigating Officer and as an aid to investigations; various factors which have a bearing indeciding to place a suspect under arrest are:—

(i) the seriousness of the Offence in terms of its nature as also quantum of involvement viz-a-viz the suspect;

(ii) past record and background of the accused:

(iii) apprehensions about his tampering with the material evidence or in influencing/ preventing the potential witnesses from rendering evidence by resorting to threats intimidation or inducement;

(iv) apprehensions about his fleeing justice and thereby thwarting the process of further investigation and trial;

(v) for ensuring his availability for the purposes of the trial.

The Directorate seeks remand or extension of remand, inrespect of the person arrested and produced before the competent Courts, only in those cases and only for such length of time as is absolutely essential and justified for the conduct of investigations. Infact, the Directorate, while seeking remand/ extenstion of remand, places all the relevant facts/material before the Court, and, the Hon'ble Court, after taking into consideration and appreciating all these facts and circumstances of each case, issues such Orders for remand or bail, as it considers appropriate. Hence, it cannot be said that the remand or extension thereof could be for any undue long period.

A review of FERA, 1973 was initiated in 1992 by setting up a Task Force. Further changes, if any, may also be considered in due Course.

(d) and (e) Section 58 of FERA, 1973 deals with vexatious search or arrest of persons by Enforcement Officer i.e. without having a responsible suspicion. Further under Seciton 52 of the Act a separate Appeliate Board has been constituted to hear appeals against the order of Adjudicating Officers.

FERA Violation Case against Dennet Coleman and Company

*371. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any case against Times of India Group and Bennet Coleman and Company regarding FERA violation is pending; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The investigations in this case were kept in abeyance since the matter was sub-judice in Calcutta High Court.

Criteria for Declaring Outbreak of an Epidemic

*372. SHRI MD. SALIM:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the Criteria to declare outbreak of an epidemic';

(b) whether the current Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF), which claimed, hundreds of lives in Delhi and thousands of DHF patients reported in hospitals, was an epidemic;

(c) whether State Government of Delhi after its failure to fight the disease and mosquito menace had sought any help from the Centre; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) The unusual occurrence of a disease in a community or region, clearly in excess of the expected levels signifies the onset of an epidemic or outbreak. The trend noticed in the past signifies the "expected" frequency.